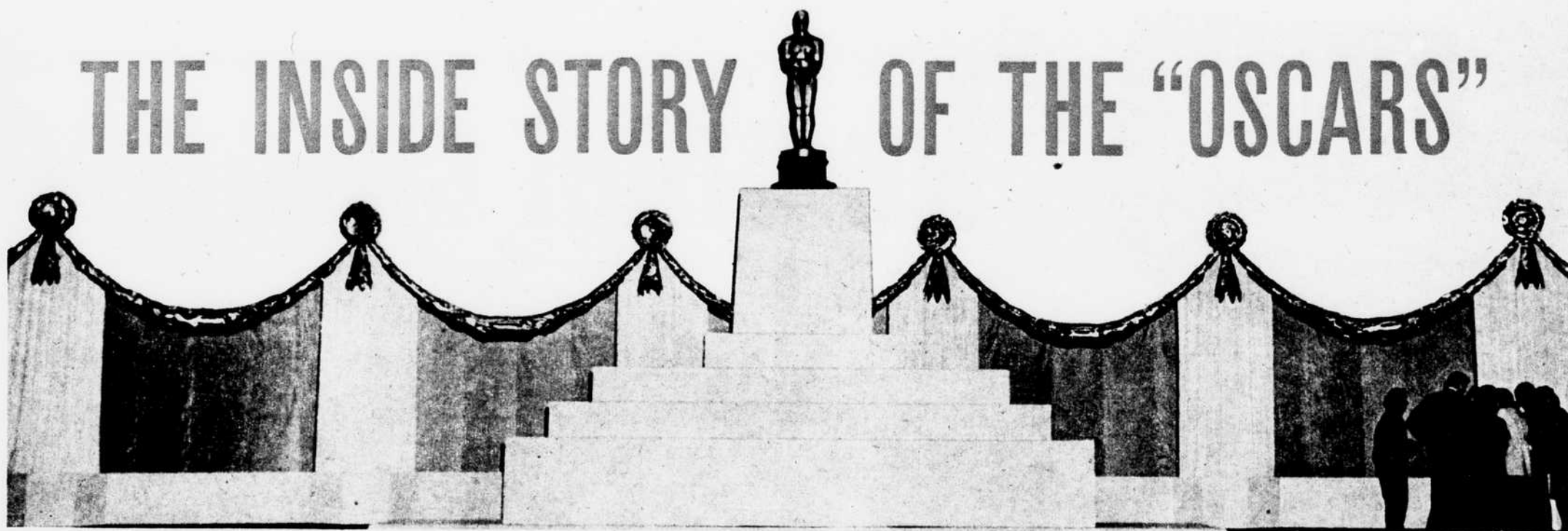


# THE INSIDE STORY OF THE "OSCARs"



**STAGING** of elaborate Oscar ceremonies costs Hollywood movie companies up to \$100,000 every year — but the prestige is worth it



**EDMUND GWENN**, a 1947 winner, and Anne Baxter

The Academy Award dinner always provides amusing and slightly scandalous stories. Here are things you never knew about Hollywood's top prize winners

**by Louis Berg**

*This Week Movie Editor*

**A**BOUT this time every year a fever sweeps through Hollywood. It's something like Washington, D. C., on the eve of a Presidential election.

Cause of the furor is the annual Hollywood glamour sweepstakes, commonly known as the Oscar awards. They fall this year on Thursday, March 23.

Each year the 2,000 members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences vote to present gold-plated statuettes, the Oscars, for the finest acting performances, best direction, best script, best music, etc. **An auditorium is hired, all the movie people get together for the ceremonies, and there is much fanfare. One year, searchlights lined the avenue to the auditorium for 13 blocks.**

This is Hollywood's biggest display of names and faces. To win an Oscar is the dream and goal of almost every man and woman in Hollywood. This is one show everybody turns out for.

Perhaps the secret of the Award's prestige and popularity lies in the jauntiness of the title. It is unlikely that the Oscars would command as much attention, or get as much publicity, if they were tagged the "Annual Awards of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences," or even with the more euphonious abbreviation, "AMPAS Awards."

The name Oscar came about by sheer accident, it is interesting to note. Margaret Herrick, secretary of the Academy, viewing the statuette for the first time, exclaimed: "Why, it reminds me of my Uncle Oscar."

## Hall of Fame

**T**HIS was sheer and inexplicable whimsy. Mrs. Herrick hasn't even got an Uncle Oscar. But the name caught on, and so did the awards themselves, which have come to represent the ultimate in screen recognition and prestige.

There are other awards that might seem to merit this consideration — the national and the New York Film Critics' polls, the National Board of Review selections, Quigley's list of Money-Making Stars, and others. But the Oscar stands out — as strong and shining as the statue itself.

The intrinsic value is small — maybe \$100. But possession means millions at the box office.

The star who wins an Oscar Award gets permanent possession of a place in Hollywood's Hall of Fame —

though curiously some of the true movie immortals, Greta Garbo, Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, haven't a single Oscar to their names.

So precious are the Oscars that the tendency is towards the widest possible distribution — in an effort to make everybody happy. Nobody in Hollywood owns more than two of them. The atmosphere on Academy Night, accordingly, is charged with emotion.

When Greer Garson, normally intelligent and self-possessed, won her Oscar, she gushed for 20 minutes (15 past her allotted time) in praise of the producer, director, writer, call boy — anybody connected with "Mrs. Miniver." In her rapture, she forgot — but the audience gleefully remembered — that she had originally fought against making the picture.

## Fast Recovery

**JOAN CRAWFORD** was down with influenza and 104° fever, on Oscar Night. But she sat up, eyes shining, to pose for photographers, her misery forgotten.

Only a few have been able to maintain their calm when the award came their way. Shirley Temple — she was eight years old at the time — displayed remarkable poise. "Mommy," she inquired, "can we go home now?"

**Jackie Cooper**, as a small boy in 1931, was in close competition with **Lionel Barrymore** for the best actor award of that year. The veteran Barrymore won out, but it was quite a tussle. All eyes were turned in sympathy to the defeated youngster. He was fast asleep in Marie Dressler's lap.

Shirley and Jackie were perhaps the only two actors ever to be indifferent to the prestige, publicity and popularity that goes with an Oscar. Adults are not so blasé.

When you consider how much the Oscars mean to Hollywood, the actual ceremonies of Oscar Night are, for all of the searchlights and the glamorous audience, surprisingly dull. This is probably because of the large number of awards, spread through every cultural and technical branch of the industry. Thirty speeches of presentation, another 30 of acceptance — all remarkably alike — don't add up to an exciting evening.

Regulars who have been attending these affairs year after year can recite most of the acceptance speeches by heart. "I am happy, proud and lucky..." I want

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## FAVORITES IN 1950's OSCAR DERBY



Olivia de Havilland



Broderick Crawford